

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 IO-13  
CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 DODE-00 L-03 PA-01 ACDA-12  
TRSE-00 /079 W  
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R 240900Z FEB 78  
FM USMISSION USBERLIN  
TO AMEMBASSY BONN  
SECSTATE WASHDC 6311  
INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 USBERLIN 0436

E.O.11652: XGDS-1  
TAGS: PGOV, GE, GW, UR, WB  
SUBJECT: BOELKE ON BRUNET/ABRASIMOV DECEMBER 8 CONVERSATION;  
FRG ACTIONS ON BERLIN

REF: (A) BONN 3067, (B) USBERLIN 361, (C) 77 USBERLIN 3126

BEGIN SUMMARY. IN THOUGHTFUL PIECE I FEB. 19 TAGESSPIEGEL,  
VETERAN BERLIN-WATCHER JOACHIM BOELKE PUT TOGETHER CONTROVERSY  
ABOUT ABRASIMOV/BRUNET CONVERSATION ON DEC. 8 TO CONCLUDE  
THAT ABRASIMOV HAD INDEED SAID THE SOVIET UNION MIGHT LOOK FOR  
ANOTHER INTERLOCUTOR ON BERLIN ISSUE, BUT THAT ABRASIMOV HAD  
NOT HAD THE GDR IN MIND (AS MOST PEOPLE CONCLUDED), OR THE  
SENAT (THE FRENCH GUESS), BUT THE FRG. AT LEAST ONE LOCAL  
SOVIET JOURNALIST HAS MADE THIS POINT IN CONTRADICTION TO  
SOVIET DENIALS THAT ABRASIMOV EVER UTTERED THE CONTROVERSIAL  
SENTENCE. BOELKE REASONED THAT THE SOVIET UNION MAY FEEL IT  
CAN PUT PRESSURE MORE EASILY ON THE FRG THAN THE THREE ALLIES.  
HE ALSO ARGUED THAT THE FRG WOULD DO WELL ON BERLIN MATTERS  
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TO AVOID THE TEMPTATION OF ASCRIBING TO ALLIED RESERVATIONS  
ITS OWN POLITICAL RELUCTANCE TO UNDERTAKE THIS OR THAT  
ACTION IN BERLIN. END SUMMARY.

1. FEBRUARY 19 TAGESSPIEGEL CARRIED FRONT-PAGE BOELKE  
EDITORIAL ABOUT LAST WEEK'S LEAK OF BRUNET/ABRASIMOV CON-  
VERSATION AS WELL AS PRESS REPORTING ABOUT DISCUSSION OF

EXFILTRATION ISSUE IN BONN GROUP. BOELKE CORRECTLY POINTED OUT THAT THE REPORT THAT ABRASIMOV RAISED EXFILTRATION WITH BRUNET WAS FALSE. (NOTE: WE KNOW THAT A SOVIET JOURNALIST WAS SOURCE OF THE FALSE REPORT.) HE THEN ADDED THAT THE IMPRESSION NEVERTHELESS EXISTS THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE PRESSURED THE ALLIES ON EXFILTRATION, AND THAT THE ALLIES VIA THE BONN GROUP HAVE PASSED ON THIS PRESSURE TO THE FRG. BOELKE NOTED HOW CONVENIENT IT IS FOR THE FRG IN AVOIDING INTERNAL POLITICAL DISPUTES ABOUT EXFILTRATION TO BE ABLE TO CITE ALLIED PRESSURE AS A REASON FOR TAKING ACTION. HOWEVER, BOELKE ADDED, THE TRUTH IS THAT IT IS UP TO THE FRG TO RECONCILE ITS TRANSIT AGREEMENT OBLIGATIONS WITH THE FRG LEGAL SITUATION AND THE ALLIES SHOULD NOT BE BROUGHT INTO SUCH PROBLEMS TOO EARLY.

2. BOELKE THEN POINTED OUT THAT IF THE REPORT THAT ABRASIMOV RAISED EXFILTRATION WITH BRUNET WAS FALSE, THE OTHER REPORT THAT ABRASIMOV HAD THREATENED TO SEEK ANOTHER PARTNER ON BERLIN MATTERS WAS CORRECT. BOELKE OBSERVED THAT EVERYONE SEEMED TO HAVE JUMPED TO A FALSE CONCLUSION ABOUT THIS ABRASIMOV UTTERANCE, NAMELY THAT THE GDR WOULD BE THE NEW PARTNER. ABRASIMOV HAD IN MIND THE FRG RATHER THAN THE GDR (IN THE CONNECTION FALIN'S AUTHORIZATION TO DISCUSS BERLIN MATTERS IN BONN REPORTED IN PARA 2 OF REF A IS INTERESTING). BOELKE RATIONALIZED THAT THE SOVIET MESSAGE TO THE FRG REALLY IS THAT THE FRG WILL FIND ALLIED PROTECTION

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INSUFFICIENT TO PROTECT THE FRG FROM THE CONSEQUENCES OF FRG VIOLATIONS OF THE QA. IN A VARIATION ON THIS THEME, BOELKE RAISED ANOTHER POSSIBILITY - IF THE SOVIET UNION DEALS DIRECTLY WITH THE FRG ON BERLIN MATTERS, THE ALLIES WILL SEE THEIR OWN POSITION IN BERLIN THREATENED AND WILL THEREFORE FINALLY BEGIN TO PRESSURE THE FRG NOT TO COMMIT QA VIOLATIONS. BOELKE SUMMARIZED THAT IN ALL LEGALLY PERMISSIBLE DEVELOPMENT OF TIES, THE FRG WILL RECEIVE ALLIED SUPPORT WHEN NECESSARY ACTIONS ARE INVOLVED. BUT WHEN A QUESTION OF POLITICAL OPPORTUNENESS RATHER THAN NECESSITY IS INVOLVED, WHICH CAN BE DECIDED ONE WAY OR THE OTHER, THEN THE FRG SHOULD BE FULLY RESPONSIBLE FOR ITS DECISION AND NOT RPT NOT TRY TO BRING THE ALLIES INTO THE GAME. AS SOON AS THE FRG CLAIMS THAT IT DOES NOT WISH TO UNDERTAKE AN ACTION BECAUSE OF ALLIED RESERVATIONS, THE FRG HAS CONVERTED A MINOR QUESTION OF OPPORTUNENESS INTO A BASIC QUESTION INVOLVING THE LEGAL INTERPRETATION BY THE ALLIES OF THE QA. IN SUMMARY, WHEN THE FRG DECIDES TO DEVELOP ITS TIES TO BERLIN, IT SHOULD BE SURE OF BOTH THE LEGAL SITUATION

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AND THE NECESSITY FOR THE ACTION; IN SUCH CASES, IT CAN  
BE SURE OF ALLIED SUPPORT. BUT WHEN THE NECESSITY IS NOT  
CLEAR AND ESSENTIALLY A MATTER OF POLITICAL OPPORTUNENESS  
INVOLVED, THEN THE DECISION MUST BE THAT OF THE FRG. IN  
SUCH CASES, THE FRG WILL HAVE CONSULTED WITH THE ALLIES,  
BUT THE END RESULT MUST APPEAR AS AN FRG AND NOT AN ALLIED  
DECISION.

3. COMMENTS: WE KNOW THAT AT LEAST ONE SOVIET JOURNALIST  
IN EAST BERLIN HAS POINTED OUT TO A WESTERN JOURNALIST THAT  
ABRASIMOV'S STATEMENT ABOUT A NEW INTERLOCUTOR ON BERLIN  
QUESTIONS WAS MISUNDERSTOOD. THIS ADMISSION THAT ABRASIMOV  
MADE THE STATEMENT IN QUESTION IS OF COURSE IN CONFLICT  
WITH OTHER SOVIET ASSERTIONS THAT HE SAID NO RPT NO SUCH  
THING - AND EVEN THAT THE FRENCH EMBASSY IN BONN ISSUED A  
DENIAL (SIC\*). WE SUSPECT THE REAL EMBARRASSMENT IS ON  
THE SOVIET SIDE FOR MAKING A UNAUTHORIZED STATEMENT, AND  
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FOR THE COMPLICATIONS IT SPUBLICATION MIGHT CAUSE WITH THE  
GDR AND MAYBE MOSCOW. EVEN IF THIS IS TRUE, HOWEVER, THE

MYSTERY REMAINS WHETHER THE CONTROVERSIAL STATEMENT RAN AGAINST MOSCOW POLICY, OR WHETHER ABRASIMOV REVEALED PREMATURELY A NEW POLICY THRUST.

4. AS FOR BOELKE'S THESIS ON TIES, WE AND THE FRENCH AND BRITISH HERE COULD NOT BE HAPPIER WITH THE WAY THE BOELKE PRESENTED THE ISSUE. IN PRACTICAL POLITICAL TERMS, HOWEVER, WE ARE NOT CONFIDENT THAT THE POLITICAL OPPORTUNENESS "STAND UP AND BE COUNTED" INJUNCTION TO THE FRG WILL HAVE MUCH EFFECT. IN BONN AS ELSEWHERE THOSE WHO MUST MAKE POLITICALLY-CONTROVERSIAL DECISIONS ARE NOT AVERSE TO LAYING AS MUCH RESPONSIBILITY AS POSSIBLE ON OTHERS' SHOULDERS. GEORGE

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## Message Attributes

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